

Competitive Education Grants

NOAA's Competitive Education Grants create and sustain partnerships with outstanding education institutions that use NOAA's assets to improve the understanding and application of earth systems science and advance science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. The program supports increased use of environmental information to promote stewardship and informed decision making by a diverse pool of educators, students and the public. Improving the public's environmental literacy, its understanding of how our Nation's natural resources are managed, and its understanding of the importance of these resources is critical to meeting the Agency's science, service, and stewardship mission.



Children learn about ocean acidification at the Pacific Science Center (PSC). Photo courtesy of PSC.

As part of competitive education grants, targeted group competitions are offered through **NOAA's Environmental Literacy Grants (ELG) program**, the longest standing and most comprehensive national grants program focused on environmental literacy. The Environmental Literacy Grants program is notably competitive, as only 12% of peer reviewed applications ultimately receive funding. For more information about the ELG program, please visit <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elg.html>.

2014 Program Impacts

- ❖ More than **6,000 science educators** received NOAA supported professional development using evidence based practices and conveying Earth system science in compelling and relevant ways
- ❖ More than **180,000 youth and adult learners** engaged in NOAA supported high quality experiences to increase their understanding and ability to apply concepts focused on improving environmental literacy
- ❖ More than **100 science education institutions** offered NOAA supported compelling, up-to-date information on the ocean, coasts, Great Lakes, weather, and climate to over **60 million people** through formal and informal education programs as well as exhibits such as the Science On a Sphere and the Ocean Today Kiosk.

To date, competitive education grants have supported **120 awards** totaling approximately **\$74 million** and have included professional development for K-12 and informal educators, field-based education, citizen science, and exhibits at aquariums, museums and science.



*Science On a Sphere at the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI), Chicago, IL.
Photo courtesy of MSI.*

Evaluation and Advancing the Field

Grant recipients must demonstrate their use of activity-specific evidence-based practices. For example, professional development activities are guided by the standards contained within the National Research Council's *A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas*. All funded projects conduct formative and summative evaluations and submit reports to NOAA.

Grant recipients also share information about their projects' impacts and lessons learned through www.informalscience.org, an online resource for science education projects that are implemented by informal science institutions. Recipients supported by NOAA's Competitive Education Grants program submit project descriptions, evaluation (formative and summative) reports and products, and research and reference materials on the site.